



Fish Dealer Report



License & Statistics Section, PO Box 769, Morehead City, NC 28557

October 2011

JANUARY – JUNE 2011 PRELIMINARY COMMERCIAL LANDINGS REVIEW

From January through June 2011, commercial fishermen brought 34.9 million pounds of fish and shellfish to North Carolina docks, according to the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) Trip Ticket Program. The landings reflect a 9 percent increase over harvest levels from the first half of 2010. Finfish landings rose slightly by 2 percent and 22 percent more shellfish were landed. January through June 2011 landings were 21 percent higher overall than the previous five year average of 28.9 million pounds.

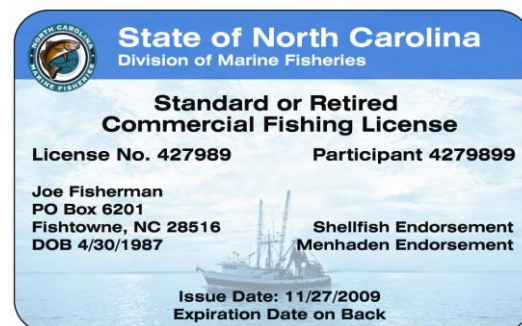
The top five species harvested the first half of the year include hard blue crabs (11.3 million pounds), Atlantic croaker (4.3 million pounds), Atlantic menhaden (3.4 million pounds), summer flounder (2.8 million pounds) and spiny dogfish (2.5 million pounds). All of these fisheries experienced increases in landings in 2011 compared to the same period last year except for Atlantic croaker, which dropped 29 percent from the 6 million pounds caught in 2010. Hard crab landings increased by 25 percent. The crab fishery also experienced a 12 percent increase in peeler crab harvest and a 44 percent increase in soft crab harvest. Boats targeting Atlantic menhaden in January and February contributed to a large increase in those landings over 2010 harvest levels. Summer flounder landings rose slightly by 4 percent, while spiny dogfish landings rose 49 percent.

While crab landings increased, the number of crab and peeler pot trips remained fairly steady, with only a 2 percent drop in effort for those gears. Looking at statewide fishing effort over the first six months of 2011, fishermen made 8 percent fewer trips overall than in the prior year. Fishing effort was down by all gear types except eel and fish pots, flounder trawls, haul seines, hand tongs and trotlines. In the shrimp fishery, although there were fewer trips by shrimp boats using trawls (down 27 percent), channel nets (down 45 percent) and skimmer trawls (down 61 percent), fishermen harvested 32 percent more shrimp -- about 110,500 more pounds than in 2010.

For more information on the preliminary harvest figures released by the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries, please review the *January - June, 2007-2011 Commercial Landings Bulletin*.

NEW LICENSE CARD IN THE WORKS

The DMF will begin issuing the Standard (SCFL) and Retired Standard Commercial Fishing Licenses in a new plastic card form sometime this fall. The License and Statistics Section has been working on a new standard commercial fishing license material to replace the paper sticker-type licenses issued over the years. The paper licenses are being replaced with a hard plastic credit card-type license. A tamper-proof stamp will be issued annually to affix to the back of the card much like vehicle license plate tags. There are plans to possibly print other license types on cards in the future.



This license must be in the holder's possession while commercial fishing. It is unlawful for a license or registration holder to fail to notify the Division of Marine Fisheries within 30 days of a change of address. A decal containing an expiration date must be affixed below to activate the license.

Affix
expiration
decal here

For questions or to report violations:
1-800-682-2632
www.ncfisheries.net

AMERICAN EEL NOTICE

Fishermen who harvest eels with eel pots must report their catches monthly to the DMF. For information on reporting, or to get a logbook and reporting supplies, contact Roz Camp at (800) 338-7804, ext. 3867.

TURTLES AND THE SECTION 10 PERMIT

Incidental take permits allow for limited takes of threatened or endangered species associated with otherwise lawful fishing activity. These permits are issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and are authorized under Section 10 of the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). Since 1999, the Pamlico Sound large-mesh gill net fishery has been subject to a closure from September 1 through November 30 due to sea turtle interactions. A highly-monitored gill net fishery in limited areas of the sound has been able to take place through a series of incidental take permits administered by NMFS. In May 2010, the division submitted an application for an incidental take permit to cover set gill nets statewide, including the Pamlico Sound Gill Net Restricted Area (PSGNRA). However, review of the application by NMFS was delayed and the permit expired December 31, 2010. NMFS has agreed to allow a fall 2011 fishery while it reviews the state's application for a new permit to include all gill net fishing in internal coastal waters statewide. The NMFS has recently published a notice of receipt of this application in the Federal Register. The notice is published to allow other agencies and the public an opportunity to review and comment on the application. Comments are being accepted until 5 p.m. (EST) December 5, 2011 and may be submitted electronically via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal at: <http://www.regulations.gov>.

THE COMMERCIAL STRIPED BASS FISHERY

Recent proposals adopted by the Marine Fisheries Commission (MFC) include a long-term plan to add hook-and-line as an allowable commercial gear in the striped bass fishery. A proposal for a possible limited entry system in the Atlantic Ocean striped bass fishery was also adopted. Additionally, the MFC approved short-term management measures to continue the Atlantic Ocean Striped Bass Commercial Gear Permit system as in prior years. Under the permit system, permit holders must declare the type of gear that will be used (gill net, trawl or beach seine). Fishermen are bound to the types of gears declared for three consecutive years. There is no deadline for obtaining the \$10 permit this year. Contact any DMF license office for a permit application or visit <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/home> and from the home page, click on: [Atlantic Ocean Striped Bass Commercial Gear Permit App.](#)

Striped Bass Seasons

Beach seine: opens December 1 with a 150-fish-per-day-per-license harvest limit and a four-man-per-license maximum crew limit; closes once the quota is met.

Gill net: opens January 1 with a 50-fish-per-day-per-vessel harvest limit; closes once the quota is met.

Trawl net: opens immediately after the gill net season closes, but no later than Jan. 15 (whichever comes first); 100-fish-per-vessel-per-day harvest limit; may only possess ocean striped bass on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays; a 15-fish-per day-per vessel bycatch is allowed from Dec. 1 until the regular trawl net season opens.

Fishermen holding either of the three gear permits will be allowed to transfer fish caught over the daily harvest limit to other striped bass permit holders. If trawl vessels return to the docks with more than their daily trip limit for any circumstance, Marine Patrol must be notified before docking. Any overages or transfers at the dock will be monitored by a Marine Patrol officer. Transferred fish will be counted against the quota. In the event of a fish spill, Division Director Louis Daniel is authorized to deduct any quantifiable waste in the commercial Atlantic Ocean striped bass fishery from the commercial quota.

LICENSE SALES

Licenses sold for fiscal year 2011 (May 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011) by license type; includes active licenses only. Totals do not include transfers, voids or replacements.

Standard Commercial Fishing License	5,747
Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License	1,071
Commercial Fishing Vessel Registration	8,799
License to Land Flounder from Atlantic Ocean	148
Land or Sell License	83
NC Resident Shellfish License Without SCFL	2,150
Menhaden License Non-Resident Without SCFL	12
Fish Dealer License	834
Spotter Plane License	10
Ocean Pier License	21
Recreational Fishing Tournament License	17
Recreational Commercial Gear License	<u>4,802</u>
Total Licenses For All License Types	23,694

The Division of Marine Fisheries is dedicated to ensuring sustainable marine and estuarine fisheries and habitats for the benefit of the people of North Carolina.